

**THE BODY OF CHRIST; AN
ENQUIRY INTO THE
INSTITUTION AND DOCTRINE
OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649744985

The Body of Christ; An Enquiry Into the Institution and Doctrine of Holy Communion by
Charles Gore

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AN ENQUIRY INTO THE INSTITUTION AND
DOCTRINE OF HOLY COMMUNION

By CHARLES GORE, M.A., D.D.

*Of the Community of the Resurrection
Canon of Westminster*

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
153-157 FIFTH AVENUE
1901

TRAIBURY, AGNEW, & CO., LITH. PRINTERS,
LONDON AND TORONTO.

PREFACE.

THIS enquiry into the institution and doctrine of the holy eucharist was first announced under the title of *The Breaking of the Bread*; but as it appeared that this title was already appropriated, *The Body of Christ* was chosen for a title, because it expresses two most important aspects of eucharistic truth. It expresses the nature of the gift presented to us in the sacrament (*corpus Christi*), and also the nature of the holy society of which it is the spiritual nourishment, and of which it is written, "Ye are the body of Christ."

It is important in the case of any enquiry to state what is its point of departure. I wish therefore to make it plain at starting that I assume the belief in Christ expressed in the Nicene Creed, and I assume also the substantial truth of the passages in the New Testament which bear upon the institution of the eucharist. (Thus, as a minor part of this assumption, it is taken for granted,

though only incidentally, that however we deal with the apparent discrepancy between the synoptists and St. John, the eucharist must be allowed to have its roots, in some way, among the associations of the paschal meal.) There is of course at the present moment a most real and serious need to vindicate afresh the historical character of the Gospels: and the examination into their trustworthiness, which must be the basis of any such vindication, cannot be too stringent. But the task is not attempted in this volume. I must content myself with referring to the thorough and impartial investigations of Dr. Sanday (see page 310).

I ought also to explain that I have not traversed again ground that I had gone over in a volume entitled *Dissertations*. I had there discussed (for instance) Tertullian's doctrine of the eucharist, and given quotations to illustrate the history of the doctrine of transubstantiation; and I have here simply referred to these discussions and quotations.¹

¹ In both volumes Migne's *Patrologia Græca* and *Latina* are referred to as *P. G.* and *P. L.* with the number of the volume and column added.

In the case of a book which does not claim to be a complete treatise, I hope that the full Table of Contents, prefixed to this volume, will be found as useful as an index.

I am very well aware that to some people, more or less theologically or ecclesiastically minded, this book will seem in part too indefinite, and to others of an opposite state of mind, if they should happen to read it, by far too definite. To the former I have said what I can in the course of the argument. To the latter I would take this opportunity of saying, that at a certain stage of religious progress it seems to be better not to attempt to think too accurately about the Holy Communion, but to use, with what faith and devotion is possible, a sacrament of which it was said at its institution, "*Do this*" (not "*think this*") "*in remembrance of me.*" But when the mind has become habituated to the thought of the incarnation and of Christ's life communicated to us by the Spirit—a thought which holds so central a place in the New Testament—it ought to become possible, nay necessary, for us, to exercise our minds also upon the eucharist, and to gain as great clearness of intellectual apprehension upon this subject as upon

any part of the divine method in the redemption of man.

I should like to add that this book is in part the result of an attempt to clear up my own thoughts on eucharistic subjects in view of the "Round Table Conference" to which I had been summoned by the late Bishop of London, whose loss the church has such profound reason to deplore; and my best prayer in sending it out is that it may serve in some measure the object of that Conference—the promotion of mutual understanding and unity among Christians.

CHARLES GORE.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY,
Quinquagesima, 1901.

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